

JAMES R. DERRYBERRY
DIRECTOR

August 9, 2000

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Attn: Nina Bicknese
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: DRAFT INTEGRATED GENERAL RE-EVALUATION REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO THE GUADALUPE RIVER PROJECT IN DOWNTOWN SAN JOSE.

Dear Ms. Bicknese:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DEIR/SEIS) for the Proposed Modifications to the Guadalupe River Project in Downtown San Jose. The City of San Jose requests that the document be revised to address the following comments:

1. Section 6.2.1.4 of the Draft EIR/SEIS (Page 6-5) is incorrect. Neither the adopted 1997 San Jose International Airport Master Plan, nor any subsequent City or airport plan, has proposed replacement of the Airport Parkway Bridge or any specific widening of Airport Boulevard. Construction of the Skyport Bridge (the "new bridge south of the present bridge site") is part of the City/Caltrans Route 87 Freeway Project and was completed in 1999. The Airport Master Plan proposes construction of a two-lane bridge, currently under design, that would provide a second connection between Airport Boulevard and the existing parking lot/future garage parcel on the east side of the river north of Terminal A.

SJ-1

2. One component of the proposed SCVWD/Corps modified project is mitigation planting along the river between I-880 and Airport Parkway ("Reach A"), much of which is Airport property with an easement granted to the SCVWD. According to Page 6-7 of the Draft EIR/SEIS, the SCVWD/Corps' proposed Upper Guadalupe River Flood Control Project includes flood control improvements to Reach A. The Airport had submitted comments on the Draft EIR/EIS for this project in April 1997 and has not yet received any responses to those comments. Then, according to Page 6-9 of the Draft EIR/SEIS, the proposed Lower Guadalupe River Flood Control Project also includes flood control improvements to the same reach of the river, for which an EIR/EIS is currently being prepared by the SCVWD/Corps. The Draft EIR/SEIS therefore needs to clarify the relationship of the Reach A component of this project with the simultaneously-proposed Reach A project components of the Upper Guadalupe River Flood Control Project and Lower Guadalupe River Flood Control Project. The City needs to understand why and how three distinct flood control projects involve the same one-mile stretch of the river.

SJ-2

3. Another component of the proposed SCVWD/Corps modified project is mitigation planting along the west side of the river between Coleman Avenue and Hedding Street (“Segment 2” of the flood control project). Since much of this land is owned by the City of San Jose as Airport property (with land use oversight by the Federal Aviation Administration), the Draft EIR/SEIS should clarify the entitlement under which the Water District (or the Corps) constructs, operates, and maintains the existing flood control improvements and proposed mitigation plantings in Segment 2. The project sponsors are reminded that while the City, with required FAA concurrence, granted an easement to the Water District in 1994 for use of Airport property between Hedding Street and I-880 (“Segment 1” of the flood control project), a similar conveyance has not occurred for Segment 2.

SJ-3

4. The Airport Department should be added to the SCVWD’s distribution list for project-related documents and notices. Mailings should be sent to: City of San Jose Airport Department, 1732 N. First Street, Suite 600, San Jose, CA 95112, Attn: Cary Greene, Airport Planner. The project sponsors are encouraged to contact Mr. Greene at (408) 501-7702, or David Maas, Deputy Director of Aviation, at (408) 501-7704 to discuss the above comments.

SJ-4

We look forward to reviewing the final document when it becomes available. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact me at 408-277-4576.

Sincerely,

Janis Moore
Planner II